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HILLTOPICS

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volume two, issue eight
week of october 17, 2005

Got flu? From Shanghai to the Hilltop, various forms of influenza heighten need for vaccinations

by Mark McDowell

People know it's common courtesy to cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough, but now it's even more important. Flu season is arriving, and if you're not careful, you could be one of the unlucky individuals taking a two-week vacation in your bed with a thermometer and hot chicken noodle soup. The virus is usually spread through contact with water droplets from coughs and sneezes. Keep in mind that the virus can also be spread by hand contact if someone's hands touch respiratory droplets of an infected person and then touch his or her own nose or mouth.

Again this year, there will be a shortage of flu vaccine in America, thanks to the closing of our second biggest supplier, Chiron Corporation in Britain. Other than Chiron, Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. will make 60 million doses, GlaxoSmithKline, Inc. will make eight million doses, and MedImmune Vaccines, Inc. will make three million doses in the form of a nasal spray. On March 2, the British Medicines and Health Care Products Regulatory Agency lifted a prior suspension on Chiron's license to manufacture influenza vaccine at their factory in Liverpool. This paved the way for Chiron to begin production of its proposed 18 to 26 million doses for America. However, on October 5, Chiron was again shut down due to health concerns. The demand for the flu vaccine in America is estimated to reach more than 100 million this year, leaving a demand for at least 30 million doses.

At SMU, there will still be vaccinations at the Health Center for students and those in need. Unfortunately, the vaccine is not yet available to everyone. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that until October 24, only priority patients be vaccinated. This means that unless you are either over 65 years old, pregnant, under 23 months old, or have a chronic illness, you might not be eligible for the vaccine until priority patients get it first.

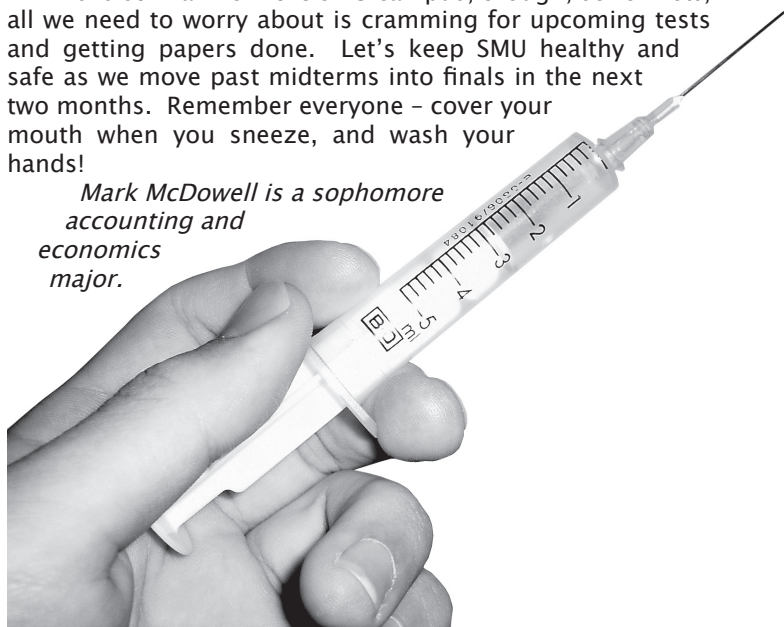
A situation like this can only be resolved one way. The government needs to call upon more drug manufacturers to produce more vaccines. Relying on four companies alone to protect our nation against disease is careless. Imagine if Sanofi Pasteur got shut down due to some problem with safety or health conditions or a terrorist attack. That would

limit our supply to 11 million vaccines. I'm proud of our Federal Drug Administration for protecting us from poor and illegitimate drugs, but the cost of this needs to be kept in check. We still need to be supplied with enough safe vaccinations at a reasonable price.

Thank God we haven't been hit with the H5N1 virus, or bird flu, that is causing a stir in Asia. This highly lethal virus has killed more than half of all humans it has infected, and it is appearing in more and more people in Asia. The governments of those countries need to hurry to contain this potential pandemic like they did in the past. Between late 2003 and 2004, more than 100 million birds in affected countries either died from the H5N1 virus or by a culling to help control the outbreak. If the H5N1 virus gains the ability to be efficiently transmitted among humans, an outbreak of influenza could result in high rates of illness and death.

This is still far from the SMU campus, though, so for now, all we need to worry about is cramming for upcoming tests and getting papers done. Let's keep SMU healthy and safe as we move past midterms into finals in the next two months. Remember everyone - cover your mouth when you sneeze, and wash your hands!

Mark McDowell is a sophomore accounting and economics major.



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Be Heard: Got an opinion? *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions and interesting feedback. Email your thoughts to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300-600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

Only human: ALCS controversy results in an explosion of unfair criticism of sports officials

by Douglas Hill

The Miami Dolphins signed quarterback Dan Marino in 1983 for one specific reason: they wanted to win another Super Bowl, and they wanted Marino to help them do it. Marino played for 16 years and never accomplished this goal. In fact, the only year his team even made it to the Super Bowl was 1984, and expectations were high for Marino. Given that Dolphins ran the ball 74 times in the AFC Championship Game and only eight times in the Super Bowl, they clearly thought their best chance was with Marino. But Marino let them down. He threw two interceptions and fumbled the ball. He was never able to make it back to the Super Bowl again, despite eight more trips to the playoffs. So his NFL career was a failure, right?

Even my nine-year-old sister knows how ridiculous that question is. Marino retired with 26 NFL records and nine pro-bowl appearances, his jersey number has been retired by the Dolphins, and he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame this past August. Everyone in the sports world understands one thing: results aren't everything. Dan Marino doesn't have a Super Bowl ring; Trent Dilfer does.

I couldn't help but think of Marino last week as I witnessed the vicious attacks on Doug Eddings, the unfortunate home plate umpire who made the worst mistake of his career at a pretty bad time. Eddings blew a very easy call in the bottom of the ninth inning of game two of the American League Championship Series, and the result of the call was a White Sox victory instead of a trip to extra innings. The Los Angeles Angels were pissed. So were their fans. And league officials. And sportscasters. And basically anyone else who isn't a White Sox fan.

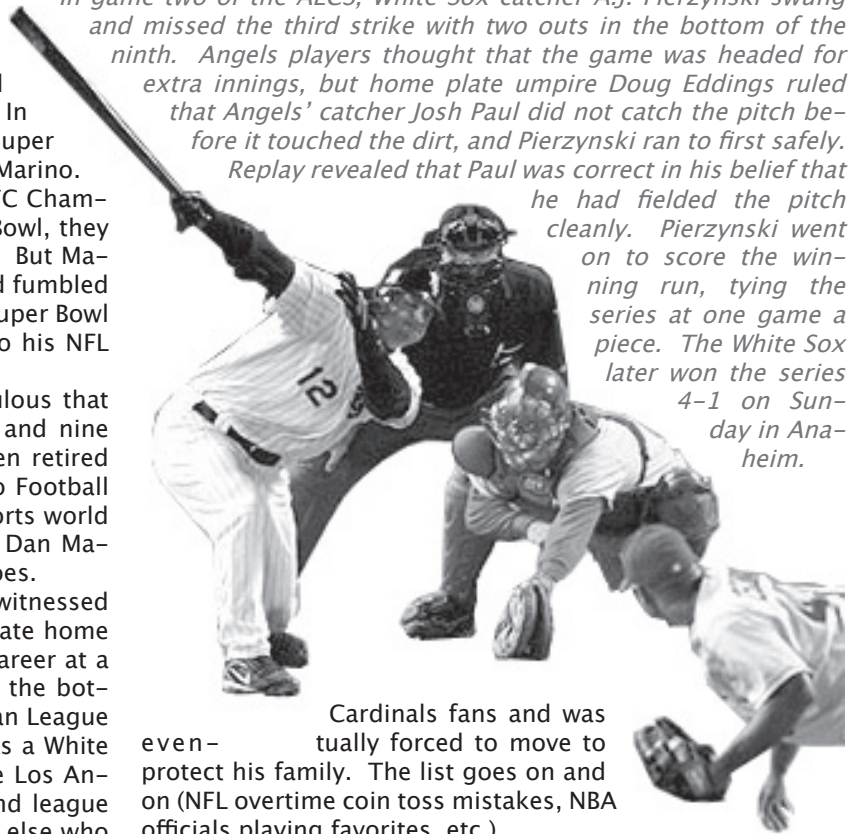
But I don't get it. So Eddings made a mistake. So what? Marino turned the ball over three times, perhaps costing his team a Super Bowl win. Eddings' mistake was just one game of a seven-game series, and it wasn't even the World Series. With a few rare exceptions (Bill Buckner, anyone?), a player can make a mistake—even a big, catastrophic mistake—and still be encouraged to "go get 'em next time," but if an official makes a mistake, he gets absolutely lambasted by the press, the players, and the league.

Don't believe me? Ask Don Denkinger. He was an outstanding umpire for 31 seasons and was eventually promoted to crew chief, the highest position a baseball umpire can obtain. Nobody remembers that. They remember that he cost the Cardinals Game Six of the 1985 World Series because of one blown call. Never

mind that the Cardinals could have ended the game on the next at bat by catching Steve Balboni's pop up, or that they could have won the series had they not lost to the Royals by 11 runs in Game Seven; Cardinals fans still feel robbed. In fact, Denkinger received death threats after the game from

In game two of the ALCS, White Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski swung and missed the third strike with two outs in the bottom of the ninth. Angels players thought that the game was headed for extra innings, but home plate umpire Doug Eddings ruled that Angels' catcher Josh Paul did not catch the pitch before it touched the dirt, and Pierzynski ran to first safely. Replay revealed that Paul was correct in his belief that

he had fielded the pitch cleanly. Pierzynski went on to score the winning run, tying the series at one game a piece. The White Sox later won the series 4-1 on Sunday in Anaheim.

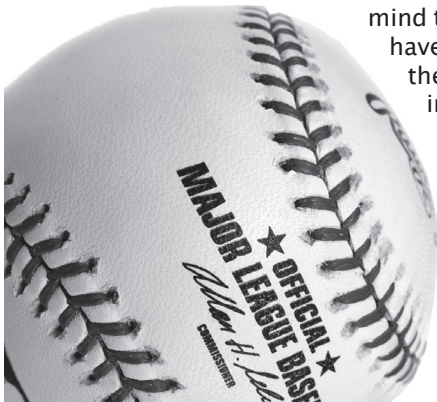


Cardinals fans and was even—tually forced to move to protect his family. The list goes on and on (NFL overtime coin toss mistakes, NBA officials playing favorites, etc.).

Obviously, because officials are fairly unknown in the sports world, there is little chance for redemption. Nobody is going to notice next year when Doug Eddings doesn't blow a call all season, but everyone noticed when Dan Marino redeemed himself by throwing 40 touchdown passes in 1986.

So yes, Eddings screwed up, and yes, he chose a very bad time to screw up. But no one, not even an MLB umpire, is perfect. I got in trouble at a baseball game when I was 10 for arguing with an umpire, and my mother said I couldn't play again until I learned that (in her motherly words) "the umpire is right, even when he's wrong." Nowadays I work as an amateur official for five sports, and I understand what she meant. Being an official doesn't take the same kind of skills it takes to shoot a three-pointer or hit a home run, but it does take special skills, and just like I occasionally struck out in baseball, sometimes I blow a call as an official. Doug Eddings does it a lot less often than I do, though, so it's hard for me to tolerate all of the criticism he's taking.

Douglas Hill is a junior international studies major.



No-branier: There's only one choice for the George W. Bush Presidential Library, and we're it

by Courtney Hebb

The ultimate test of George W. Bush's intelligence has nothing to do with foreign policy, the national economy or domestic affairs, but rather where he chooses to locate his presidential library. The choice is obvious because obviously there is no choice; it has to be at SMU. Between the president's personal connections, personnel's connections and just plain common sense, there is no decent alternative. I'm so sure of this fact that I'd be willing to wager my left kidney, right ear and firstborn that, by the end of his term, Bush will plant his library right here on our campus.

We all know that SMU students like to party, so it is no surprise how many SMU alumni currently dominate the Republican Party. Here are a few of the more influential SMUers: Karen Hughes ('77), who has been an advisor, counselor and friend to the president; Harriet Miers, currently the Supreme Court nominee, who received both her undergrad ('67) and law degree ('70) at SMU; Ray Hunt ('65), a major campaign contributor, who was also appointed in 2001 to the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (the same Ray Hunt who funds SMU's Hunt Scholars); AND, we shall never forget that the president has a very personal connection to an SMU alum, Mrs. Laura Bush ('68), recipient of the SMU Distinguished Alumni Award, the very Laura Bush who has her own promenade in front of Fondren Library (Christmas gift from hubby) and who also serves on the SMU Board of Trustees.

Another member of the Bush administration who has served on the SMU Board of Trustees and who has strong ties to SMU is none other than Vice President Dick Cheney. In

1996, Dick Cheney served as the diplomat-in-residence for our Tower Center for Political Studies. He has also spoken several times on campus, most recently at a Tate Lecture a couple of years ago. The President has also graced this campus with his presence several times. There was the rally to kick off his presidential campaign in Texas back in 2000 and the rally to finish his campaign for reelection last fall. Even his dear old dad, former President Bush, occasionally speaks and visits the campus. Suffice it to say, the Bush roots run deep at SMU.

But SMU would offer the president more than personal ties with warm and fuzzy feelings. If the presidential library were here, it is guaranteed to be aesthetically beautiful. One just has to look around our perfectly manicured campus to know that this school will never see an ugly building. Plus, location is everything. At SMU, we are in the heart of Dallas, a metropolitan city rich in business and culture. People come to visit, and whether it is to go to the Sixth Floor Museum, shop or because of "that one TV show," the Big D is undoubtedly a big deal. People don't necessarily go out of their way to visit presidential libraries, but if it were in Dallas, it would be convenient for visitors and tourists.

I'm sure there are many hard decisions the president faces daily, from what color tie he should wear to whether or not he should invade a country. However, this choice is a no-brainer, and only a complete idiot would choose a school other than SMU for the library.

Courtney Hebb is a senior marketing and political science major.

Teach for America program offers college graduates a chance to make a difference in the world

by Shay Fluharty ('04)

Good morning, my name is Ms. Fluharty and I will be your Spanish 1 teacher for the next year. I am from Ft. Myers, FL and graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX with degrees in Spanish and International Studies. Today we will discuss the academic expectations I will uphold this year. Before we continue, are there any questions?

As the first hand raised, I repeated silently "twenty-seven, twenty-seven" in my head. Although I was only twenty-two when I started teaching high school on the South side of Chicago, a poll of strangers proved that I could get away claiming to be twenty-seven. Surprisingly however, the first question asked did not regard my age, but rather, my marital status. After gracefully dodging the inquiry, I moved on to the next question. "Why did you decide to come to Harper," Tiffany asked, with pure wonder and curiosity. I searched for words as a million thoughts ran frantically through my head.

Great question. What persuaded me to pack my stuff and move to a city devoid of my friends and family that's below freezing 4-5 months a year? If given a choice, my students would not choose to live in the Englewood community, one of Chicago's roughest neighborhoods. I had a bounty of opportunities. Why did I choose to pour my sweat, blood, and tears into my work at Harper High School?

Millions of students in our nation are not given the opportunity they deserve to attain an excellent education. By the time they are nine years old, children growing up in a low-income neighborhood like Englewood are already three grade levels behind peers in high-income areas. What startles me

even more is the fact that students in low-income communities—by virtue of where they are born—are seven times less likely to graduate from college. These facts outraged me. It was then I learned that by joining Teach for America I could transform my anger into action and multiply my passion by inspiring it in my students.

After a thoughtful pause, I responded: *I believe that every student deserves an excellent education, and I'm going to do my best to ensure that in this classroom, that's what you receive. I was looking for a school whose students are determined and persistent enough to meet the demands of a teacher that accepts nothing but their best. I've been told that Harper students are capable of overcoming such a challenge. So, here I am.*

When I was a senior at SMU contemplating my options for the future, I knew I wanted to involve myself in something that would allow me to utilize my degrees and experiences to positively impact individual lives. I wanted to do something different and have an immediate impact. By serving as a Teach for America corps member, I've done these things alongside 2,500 current corps members in 22 other cities and 10,000 alumni who are scattered all over the world. As a teacher, I am not only an educator, but also an advocate, role model, and resource for all 180 of my students. I joined Teach for America because I wanted to be a part of a movement of people who were up for the challenge of eliminating educational inequity. Are you? If so, I encourage you to seriously consider Teach for America.

Recent Gilbert Lecture event features Caryl Phillips; Andrew Lam to speak on Vietnam next

Many SMU students (barring the lucky scholarship award-ee or the occasional usher) will become disgruntled over the course of their academic life at the tremendous hassle of getting tickets to the Tate Lectures and other such high-profile events on campus. However, it is also the curious case that many of the university's smaller, departmentally-associated lecture series go largely unattended by the student body. Now, I'll be the first to admit that these periodic gatherings often appear, on the surface, so specialized and esoteric in topic that it's tempting to just ignore the barrage of posters, flyers, emails, and handouts and spend the related weekday-evening hour otherwise. But in actuality, these lectures offer unique opportunities to be part of intimate discussions with fascinating and accomplished global leaders and represent campus activities not to be missed.

Last Wednesday night, British-Caribbean novelist and Yale Professor of English, Caryl Phillips, came to campus for a reading from his most recent book, *Dancing in the Dark*. In the fictional work *Dancing*, Phillips portrays the life of Bert Williams, 1920s African-American vaudeville star and one of the most famous performers in America's history. One of the recurring emphases in the novel falls upon matters of personal and racial representation in the overlapping spheres of entertainment and political life. The light-skinned, Caribbean-born Williams, who was well-educated enough that he earned a place at Stanford, was forced by the convention of the day to perform in blackface - darkening his skin with burnt cork, acting the stereotypical Sambo, and generally mocking himself and his cultural heritage - in order to reach his national audience and achieve status as a successful comic. Phillips explained in his lecture that the necessity of debasing himself and his background in this manner wore away at Williams throughout his life and is a lasting source of ambivalence in the present-day African American community. If these issues sound interesting, Phillips' other works include novels: *A Distant Shore*, *The Final Passage*, *A State of Independence*, *Higher Ground*, *Cambridge*, *Crossing the River*, and *The Nature of Blood*. Add them to your Amazon wish-list.

On **Thursday, October 20th** NPR commentator Andrew Lam will give a talk focused on "Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora." A reception (read: free, tasty food!) will be given at **6pm in the DeGolyer Library**

by *Rebekah Hurt*
(between Fondren and Hughes-Trigg) with the lecture (approximately one hour long) following at 6:30. Lam is a contributor to NPR's program *All Things Considered*, has written numerous short stories, is a writer and editor with the Pacific News Service, and is a co-founder of New California Media, an umbrella organization composed of some four hundred ethnic news sources in California. Lam's essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, among others.

Born in Vietnam, Lam moved to the United States in 1975 at the age of eleven. The PBS documentary film "My Journey Home" depicted his trip back to his homeland. In his introduction to the film (at www.pbs.org/weta/myjourneyhome/andrew/index.html), Lam writes, "As a child in war-time Vietnam, leaving was unthinkable and the national borders had seemed to me as concrete as the Great Wall of China. Once I had expected to grow up and follow my father's soldierly footsteps and fight for my country. But in that C-130 full of refugees, I was moving not only across the sea but from one psyche to another. Yesterday, my inheritance was simple - the sacred rice fields and rivers which once owned me, defining who I was. Today, as a journalist who covers Southeast Asia and East-West relations and whose relatives are scattered in three continents, Paris and Bangkok and Saigon are no longer fantasies, but a matter of scheduling. My identity, likewise, has become multi-layered and is in flux. Once bound by a singular sense of geography, I now have reference points across borders." In his SMU talk, Lam can be expected to elaborate on his experiences both as a member of the Vietnamese Diaspora and as a researcher of its collective characteristics.

Don't be apathetic or intimidated! The lecture atmosphere is friendly and mellow. You need not know anything about Lam, Vietnam, or anything at all to attend and to enjoy. Before further developing any resolute complaints about the lack of intellectual life on campus, you should give the Gilbert Series (and other departmental opportunities) a try. Mark your calendars and you might be pleasantly surprised; I certainly have been.

Rebekah Hurt is a senior English major.

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Honors film event



What the Bleep Do We Know?:
controversial philosophical film -
discussion to follow
Wednesday October 19 at 8pm
Virginia-Snyder Hall 2nd Floor Lounge

For more information please contact
Hershel Chapin at hchapin@smu.edu.